

Pope to publish decree against
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proposed laws ... **pg 3**

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A chat with European Parliament Speaker of the House Lambert van Nistelrooij Great strides in energy independence for Aruba in 2011 with assistance of the EU?



Lambert van Nistelrooij and his wife Lia

Lambert van Nistelrooij, a member of the European Peoples Party which holds the majority in the European Parliament, making him Speaker of the House, spent his Christmas on Aruba with his wife Lia. Though enjoying the balmy breezes, the

parliamentarian was on a fact-finding mission, which could mean great opportunities for the island of Aruba in advancing their energy independence.

Mr. van Nistelrooij sits on the European Parliament's Committee on Regional De-

velopment and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, which places him strategically to support projects and funding that he believes would be mutually beneficial to Aruba, and Europe.

Continued on page 2

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MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

A chat with European Parliament Speaker of the House Lambert van Nistelrooij

Continued from page 1

A strong proponent of the development of new energy and communications technologies, he is also the founder of the European Institute of Innovative Technologies (EIT.) He met with Prime Minister Mike Eman and Minister of Finance, Communication, Utilities and Energy, Mike de Meza, among several key parties, including staff of Aruba's Chamber of Commerce, (KvK) during his days on Aruba, exploring the possibilities of European funding for the island towards exploiting its green energy resources.

Aruba is an LGO in the EU, which classifies it as an overseas territory, allowing certain privileges, but places it, in comparison to EU members, as "being in the Bush Leagues." However, Mr. Nistelrooij is particularly interested in the island as a testing ground for new solar technologies, which could possibly result in complete energy independence for Aruba in a short time, perhaps 10-15 years, as well as the benefits it will afford European nations. "The KvK may have a bigger role in advancing this, because they are politically neutral, and also they have prepared a proposal to the European Commission for support to advance these programs in a better way." Mr. Nistelrooij confirmed his support for this proposal and is determined to



Meeting Minister of Social and Economic Affairs and Culture Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar and Director of the KvK Lorraine de Sousa

put it before the commission in the second week of January, 2011.

Aruba has previously received funds from the EU for construction of the National Archeological Museum and the formalization of the Arikok National Park as a protected wildlife refuge. However, this assistance comes from a fund which is only 6% of the EU's budget. The proposal will be placed before committees that access 45% of their budget for investment in green energy and innovative technologies, some 50 billion Euros. "If you seek funds and propose innovation rather than conservation, this allows access to the "warehouse," of funding, rather than the very small shop where Aruba is at

present," he explains. "I discussed with the KvK whether we can prepare new approaches for these funds, and we now have to make this concrete."

"The situation regarding energy in Europe has changed. Policy used to be for each of the 27 countries and the EU to regulate; now the EU accepts more responsibility. At present, 45% of the natural gas used is coming from Russia, we project that in a few years it will be 80%. However, we want to be energy independent." Having countries with political inconsistencies and fluctuating philosophies not concurrent with those of the EU can make the western nations vulnerable, including the Caribbean and Americas. Mr. Nistelrooij believes it is not only financially beneficial, but absolutely essential to develop the free sources of renewable energy that will alleviate this vulnerability, at all speed. "Now we have a new agenda, and this is a huge investment."

There is a "triangle" defined by universities in Eindhoven, Leuven and Aachen dedicated to developing means of harnessing solar and other renewable

energies that are more financially and logistically feasible than presently exists. Conventional solar panels may soon be replaced with flexible banners which can be more easily deployed. Those working on them and financing this new technology are considering a test ground; Mr. Nistelrooij believes Aruba would be ideal for this. "We would like to have a demonstration of this really new technology. We know it might work, but it isn't really on a scale as yet-we need a better climate. We want a co-location for our big centers in Europe, in the Caribbean." He urges Aruba to develop and define a concrete proposal with technology partners and investors to have access to enormous sums that has been set aside for this.

"If the government of Aruba shows interest-and they do-if they want to prepare this, it may be really important for the citizens and companies of Aruba. At present, it is speculated, but the central aim of my talks was to start with this preparation. I am really looking forward to supporting the ideas of the KvK; Aruba should be at the forefront of the new solar generation-everyone should have some sort of solar panel on their roof, and then they could bring it all into the grid and deliver back. This practice has already been established in Europe; greenhouses using geo-thermal energy to grow winter crops are actually making a greater profit from selling the energy back to the utilities." Ten years ago the greenhouses were the great energy consumers; now they are energy producers.

"I think it is important in today's global economy that Aruba and Europe take a strategic position, creating a balanced relationship where

Europe will also have a need of Aruba. The state of things requires new approaches. We are not awarding funds without the submission of a concrete plan and budget but I feel Aruba could really take advantage of this program. This does not mean Aruba has to change its status in the EU. Having it join this innovative solar program is a start. I visited a number of nations in the region, and Aruba has the vision, development and stability to interest us, but we need a clear request. Aruba could easily be on board this energy and climate change train, perhaps even in the front of the train."

Mr. van Nistelrooij maintains a website, in Dutch: <http://lambertvannistelrooij.eu>, where readers can follow his political actions and the future results of his visit to Aruba.

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Dutch roads second safest in Europe

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands -- Dutch road safety ranks second in Europe, according to a report by the European Commission and the International Automobile Federation (FIA).

Last year, an average 39 people died per one million inhabitants. With 38 deaths, the United Kingdom has Europe's safest roads.

The average figure across the European Union is 69 deaths.

The most dangerous roads are those in Romania and Greece, with 130 deaths per one million inhabitants, followed by Poland (120), Bulgaria (118) and Latvia (112).

Most of those killed are passengers, followed by pedestrians (20 percent), motorcyclist (14 percent) and cyclists (6,6 percent).

On the whole, road safety in

Europe has improved.

Since 2001, the number of traffic accidents has fallen by 21 percent.

The number of deaths has dropped by 36 percent, with a total 34,500 road deaths in 2009.

ORANJESTAD -- A process which began some 17 years ago, but which never was realized, began in earnest in November 2009 by Minister Otmar Oduber to privatize the Aruba Tourism Association (ATA). Based on a historic memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the public and private sector the matter was taken to Parliament with the proposal of a change in the law to increase room tax to 9.5%. Remarkably, every hotel concurred with the proposal and Parliament approved the proposed change. Later the Aruba Tourism Marketing Fund, also part of the MOU, was presented and Parliament approved the creation of this fund between AHATA and ATSA (respectively, Aruba

Hotel & Tourism Association and the Aruba Timeshare Association). Hence, in September two funds were presented and approved by Parliament, the Aruba Tourism Marketing Fund and the Tourism Product Enhancement Fund.

Both funds are destined to market the Aruba tourism product and to improve the quality of the Aruban tourism plant and product in general.

It was the minister's wish to have the law for the privatization of the ATA approved for implementation as of January 1st; however, due to certain logistics and administrative processes this will not be achieved. Parliament, he indicated will need ample time to review the proposed law. In the ensuing weeks they will be studying the law

to be able to later render their vote of approval.

To facilitate the process, the Judicial Department advised the minister to divide the law into two segments... one segment, dealing with the 'sui-generis' model for ATA, and the other segment dealing with the legal position of employees.

With respect to this latter segment, the legal position of employees, the social package and financing of this new institution, on December 23, the General Council (Raad van Advies) submitted their counsel and the government is currently finalizing the adaptations based on the counsel received from the General Counsel Institution.

The minister expressed great satisfaction that the

counsel received from the General Counsel Institution (Raad van Advies) is positive and that they are in agreement with the content and goals of both proposed laws and that they propose that the Governor submit them to Parliament for their approval and implementation.

Obviously, there were certain propositions made by the General Counsel, which the minister indicated that 75 to 80% of their propositions were considered and adopted into the two laws. Oduber was extremely grateful for the work done by the different persons, departments to make this possible, and that after some 17 years we can finally realize this milestone at the beginning of 2011.

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General Counsel supports proposed laws to privatize Aruba Tourism Association

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Mohandas Gandhi

MONUMENTAL Workshop to Start



On Monday, January 10, Tanja Szaraniec and Tomas Adolfs will start their workshop, dubbed, MONUMENTAL.

The 33 year old Adolfs, is a 2005 graduate of Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam.

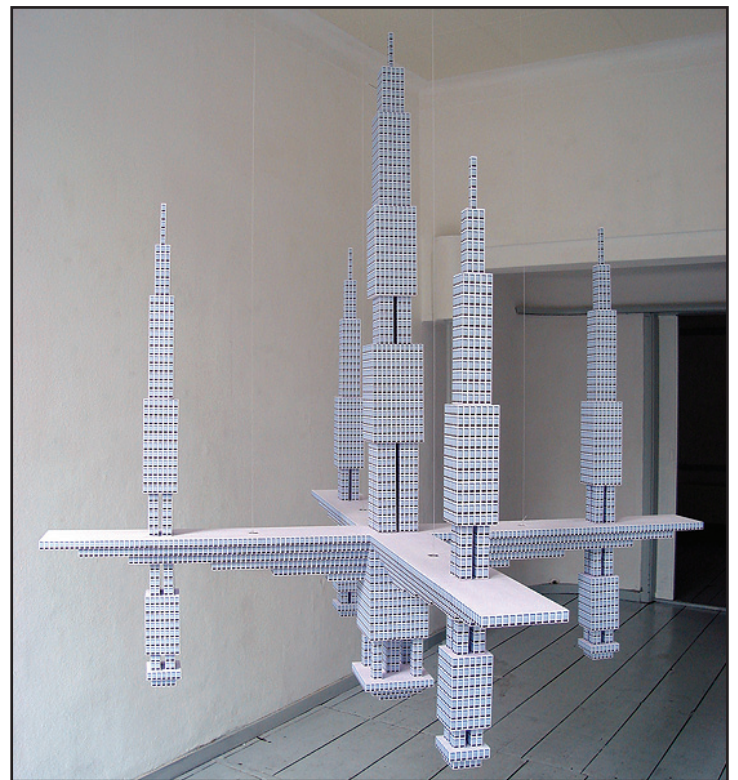
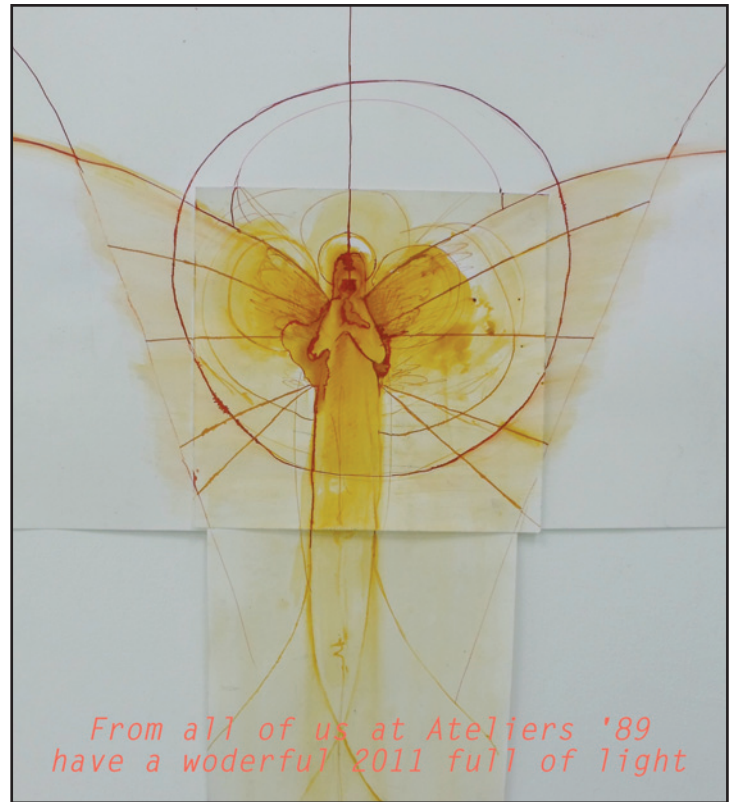
The pivotal point in his work is his fascination with aspects that the naked eye often does not see, such as the past of a place or space. Through the use of models and installations he presents stories on the map. Many of his work are designed for spaces where previously audiovisual investigation was conducted.

In 2006 he spent five months at the Bijlmer Studio, by appointment of the "Artist in Residence Program" of the State Museum of Amsterdam. It was there that he brought residents from the area in contact with the hidden history of their district.

With the support of funds from the Fonds BKVB organization he was able to reside at a 'guest studio' in Curacao. While there, he resurrected elements of the story of an investigation of an area of a vocational resort that was deteriorating.

The 29 year old Tarja Szaraniec, investigates the frontiers between figures and abstract designs through anonymous complexity. She creates designs made of different elements which return to repeat themselves structurally. Hence, her work appears as irrational sculptural constructions which have the likeness of being part of a gravitational balance.

Since 2007 both artists are working together on different projects. Together they have realized several impressive ex-



hibitions and cultural programs. One such program was "The Last Session," and "Rietveld UnCut 2009/2010."

During their MONUMENTAL workshop they will focus on the significance of the "monument" concept. Participants at the workshop will learn how to transpose an idea into form, which will evolve two elements, namely, form and sculpture. Both artists will offer a presentation of their work at the beginning of the workshop, and will complete the workshop with an exposition at Ateliers '89.



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This is the first year that Senior Frog's will celebrate New Year's Eve in their new location at the Village Mall in Palm Beach. This means that vacationers looking for a great place to ring in the New Year can enjoy the calculated craziness and yard long beverages for which the famous chain is, well... famous!

Omar and Umberto and the

bunch are looking forward to welcoming 2011 Senior Frog's style, which means two great DJ's, Chris and Steve, who will keep playing just the kind of music everyone loves to dance to, as well as hosting a slew of fun and games resulting in free drinks, great prizes and surprises.

Celebrants can choose different packages for the

evening, including a 3-course dinner with a complimentary bottle of champagne per couple for \$50; or after dinner party packages beginning at 9:00 p.m. For a flat fee of \$50 partiers can enjoy unlimited yards prepared with house brands, or enjoy a premium brand open bar through midnight for \$80 per person.

Senior Frog's staff promises



all will welcome the New Year with a bang, as they plan to light a pagara, the traditional roll of fireworks that mark the coming of midnight, which will be of epic proportions.

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By Rosalie Klein

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Sci-Tech

Sony to launch PlayStation smartphone in spring



TOKYO (AFP) — Sony's long-rumoured PlayStation Portable smartphone is set to be launched in North America and Europe as early as the spring, according to a Japanese newspaper report Wednesday.

The device would likely be based on Sony's handheld PSP Go game console, would be made by Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications and run Google's Android operating system, said the Asahi Shimbun's English edition, citing unnamed sources.

Sony hopes to take on Apple's iPhone, Research in

Motion's BlackBerry and Nokia devices by offering the first smartphone that is based on a portable game console, with a set of controls that allows very advanced gaming.

The PSP Go, launched in November 2009, already features

software downloads through a wireless connection, allowing players to also browse the Internet, watch movies, play music and read books and comics.

The new PlayStation handset would similarly work with Sony's online media platform, the company's answer to Apple's iTunes.

Sony hopes the phone will stimulate sales in the sluggish videogame console market, said the Asahi.

Sony called the newspaper report "speculation" and declined to comment.

World's oldest human remains claimed in Israel



JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli archaeologists have discovered human remains dating from 400,000 years ago, challenging conventional wisdom that Homo sapiens originated in Africa, the leader of excavations in Israel said on Tuesday.

Avi Gopher, of Tel Aviv University's Institute of Archaeology, said testing of stalagmites, stalactites and other material found in a cave east of Tel Aviv indicates that eight teeth uncovered there could be the earliest traces so far of our species.

"Our cave was used for a period of about 250,000 years -- from about 400,000 years ago to about 200,000 years

ago," he told AFP.

"The teeth are scattered through the layers of the cave, some in the deeper part, that is to say from 400,000 years and through all kinds of other layers that can be up to 200,000 years. The oldest are 400,000

years old", he added."

That calls into question the widely held view that Africa was the birthplace of modern man, said Gopher, who headed the dig at Qesem Cave.

"It is accepted at the moment that the earliest Homo sapiens that we know is in east Africa and is 200,000 years old, or a little less. We don't know of anywhere else where anyone claims to have an earlier Homo sapiens," he said.

Gopher said the first teeth were discovered in 2006 but he and his team waited until they had several samples, then conducted years of testing, using a variety of dating methods, before publishing their findings.



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Health & Living

Organ traffickers target Nepal's poorest



KAVRE, Nepal (AFP) — Seven years ago, Nepalese farmer Madhab Parajuli faced an agonising choice: lose his small plot of farmland to mounting debts, or sell one of his kidneys to an organ trafficker.

In desperation, Parajuli accepted the trafficker's offer of 100,000 rupees (1,400 dollars) and travelled to India to have the organ removed -- a decision he now bitterly regrets.

"I didn't get paid until we got back to Nepal, and then only around a third of what I'd been promised," the 36-year-old told AFP in his home village of Jyamdi, around 30 miles (50 kilometres) east of the capital Kathmandu.

"I lost my farm anyway, and if I'd known then what I know now, there's no way I would have sold my kidney."

Parajuli, whose family abandoned him after he lost all his property, looks frail and haggard. Now a day labourer, he said he finds heavy work difficult.

"I occasionally feel the pain on the side," he said, pointing to the six-inch (15 cm) scar on his right side.

Under Nepalese law, kidney transplants are allowed only if the organ is donated by a blood relative or spouse.

But India's laws are more lax, allowing a non-relative to donate an organ "out of affection", subject to the approval of a medical committee -- a checking process which can often be circumvented.

Everyone knows someone who has given up a kidney in Jyamdi, one of a cluster of impoverished villages in Nepal that have become a centre for the traders because of the proximity to Kathmandu and the Indian border.

Most of the villagers are subsistence farmers, but many cannot produce enough food for the whole year, and are forced to seek work in Kathmandu or neighbouring India.

"The organ traffickers trawl the villages looking for poor donors like Madhab," former village chief Krishna Bahadur Tamang told AFP.

"People here are poor and uneducated so it's easy. But in most cases they get only a tiny fraction of the money they were promised."

Some are even lured into India with cover stories, and only told the true purpose of their journey once they are over the border.

"The donor is in a very weak position in India, where he often cannot understand the language and has little bargaining power," he said.

A survey conducted by a local non-government organisation in 2009 put the number of people in Kavre who have sold a kidney at 300. No official statistics are available, but many people believe the true figure is much higher.

Many organs rackets in India cater for foreigners dubbed "transplant tourists", but most of the kidneys from Nepal are actually destined for Nepalese patients.

Wealthy Nepalese people suffering kidney diseases travel to India for the transplant operation, said Rishi Kumar Kafle, a Kathmandu doctor specialising in nephrology who is executive director of the National Kidney Center.

"In Nepal only the patient's blood relatives and spouse are eligible for kidney donation. Therefore, those looking for a donor outside this travel to India for transplant," he told AFP. He said the paucity of healthcare in Nepal means kidney disease often goes undetected until it is too late, leaving the victim with a choice between expensive dialysis treatment or an illegal transplant.

Nepal's weak law enforcement and open border with India make it easy for the traffickers to ply their lucrative trade, and reports suggest a kidney can fetch up to 20,000 dollars on the black market.

Police say they have struggled to make any arrests because the traffickers live outside the area, but local farmer Raman Pariyar accused authorities of ignoring the illegal trade. "Our village has developed a reputation as a place where you can buy kidney," he said.



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Two dead as flu cases widen in France



PARIS, France (AFP) - French health watchdogs said the country was officially in the grip of a flu epidemic after 176,000 people had fallen sick, two of whom have died.

To be classified as an epidemic, new cases of influenza recorded by doctors have to number more than 174 per 100,000 people per week.

This threshold was breached last week, when there were 280 cases per 100,000 people.

Three viral strains are to blame, including A(H1N1) 2009, which emerged last year as the novel "swine" flu, ac-

cording to the epidemiological networks Regional Flu Observation Groups (GROG) and Sentinelles, which is operated by the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm).

On December 23, Britain's health authorities said 27 people had died of flu, 24 of them from swine flu.

Agencies in both countries have urged people in at-risk groups -- particularly the elderly and those with respiratory problems -- to get vaccinated.

So-called "seasonal" flu epidemics are annual health problems in temperate countries with the onset of winter.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), flu epidemics result globally in about three to five million cases of severe illness per year and 250,000-500,000 deaths.

Kids Playtime Is Important

-- Playtime is more than a source of amusement for kids and their parents. It teaches toddlers social skills, how to pay attention and to use their imagination, says the American Academy of Pediatrics. It's important to offer your child time and toys to help promote growth and development, the AAP advises.

Create a play space that's safe for your child, the group says. It should be a place where your child can play freely without the risk of injury, and where you can easily keep an eye on your child.

Even simple toys can encourage imagination and wonder. Examples include blocks, crayons, plastic dishware, and pots and pans.

And don't forget to include activities outside the home, such as a story hour at the local library or a trip to the playground.

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The Palm Beach Plaza staged a spectacular two-hour show for E Regalo's last two-hour transmission. The Christmas program on channel 15, ATV, wrapped up its holiday season with a variety show filmed live in front of an audience and transmitted directly into thousands of homes on the island.

TV hosts Ruben Garcia and Cherry Muller interviewed the specialty baker of Ling & Sons Super Center regarding his holiday treats; they helped baptize a new CD production by Euphoria, a local Gaita band, introduced the seasonal music of Grupo di Betico, and gave a hand to Chevrolet's Toys for Joy Give-Away initiative.

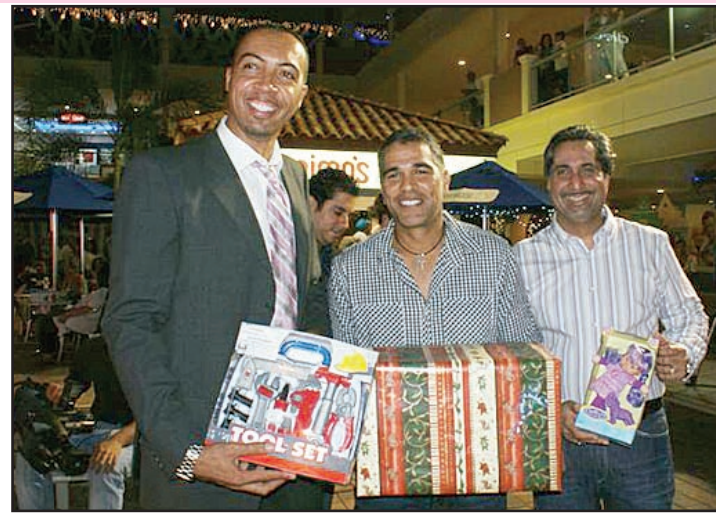
During the show, several Palm Beach Mall stores presented their fashions on the catwalk, with Aruba's top



models Ysaura, Kimberly and Casia. The stores participating in the various segments of the show were San Marina, Company 81, Panache, Sunspecs, Underground and Benetton.

Chevrolet's Toy for Joy sparked lots of excitement, as

toys were bought by Minister Richard Visser, banker Pierre Rafini, and the mall's ownership and management, and later donated to the toy drive designed to delight underprivileged children, through Fundacion Pa Nos Comunidad,



who has over 500 children from families of lesser means listed to receive a Christmas gift.

A Chevrolet Spark 2011 will be raffled among those generously buying gifts and filling out a raffle ticket.

Pictured here, the decorated mall during the live broadcast, all aglitter and aglow, with Indra Stamper, Tenant & Marketing Coordinator, Alex Otterspeer, Mall Manager and Owners' Representative Ashok Ramchandani in attendance.



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La Estrella believes Holiday Season is the time to remember the less fortunate



The residents of Ambiente Feliz, a home for the mentally challenged, were overjoyed when Alex Cybull of La Es-

trella arrived at their center with a pickup filled with gifts. Director Aromil Bakmeyer together with staff and clients

were delighted with the surprise holiday donations.

The home received a greatly-needed new refrigerator and eight standing fans.

Mr. Cybull was rewarded with a tour of the home, to more fully understand what is needed to improve the quality of life and comfort of those who live there. He also placed some presents under the Christmas tree with personal tech toys for the Ambiente Feliz residents. He expressed great satisfaction that La Estrella could provide for those in need at this time of the year, and encourages the support of all the community for their im-



Savor holiday season the island way at



There is a particularly lovely beach on Aruba with a gorgeous vista right near the airport, known always as Surfside; for some time now the building adjacent to it has gone through a string of owners seeking an appropriate identity for this special place, and it looks like it has finally found it with the opening of the Nikky Beach Club Aruba.

Our investigative team from THE MORNING NEWS went down to have a look at this latest venture, and we found just the kind of authentically tranquil, Caribbean ambience vacationers seek when

visiting Aruba. New owner Hans and his GM Paul have completely renovated and redesigned the venue to fully showcase this charming location while providing a very reasonably priced menu and bar.

The official arrival of holiday season has a number of company party planners scrambling at the last minute for a venue for their end of the year festivities; if you have a group to small for the larger resorts and are looking for a unique and charming location with an expert gourmet chef, the new Nikky Beach will very

likely come to the rescue. Contact Paul to arrange a customized holiday party for your group to fit your budget, including free-flowing mimosas.

This month they are hosting a number of special public parties on Saturday nights, starting with the 10th anniversary bash of the I LUV MUZIKA group on Saturday, December 4, which should be a blast. Until arrival of Christmas there will be more such events, and they will crown their month with a special holiday dinner on December 25 and 26.

Hans and Paul have dubbed Sunday's at Nikky Beach "Rehab Day," when they provide a particularly pleasant ambience with popular local and international DJ's from noon on and \$3 Mimosas all day long. During the traditional Happy Hour time slot, they feature live music with top local groups specializing in the soft sound of the islands.

When first investigating Nikky Beach we discovered extremely interesting items on the menu at very moderate prices; their chef offers an extensive fusion selection that re-



veals expertise in several notable cuisines coupled with a nice variety that will please everyone's mood. For lunch and snacking you find a varied choice of classic salads, favorite local treats, pastas and gourmet sandwiches. Kitchen is open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. serving breakfast, lunch and dinner.

One last interesting tidbit: Paul explained they offer a customized Departure Day Package that allows vacationer to stow their luggage, enjoy all their amenities, choose a meal, drinks or both and they will personally guarantee getting you to the airport in plenty of time for the flight. Changing

rooms and showers let you swim and beach it until departure time and you can linger without rushing, as the airport is only 2 minutes away; no worries about fighting traffic or delays. "Why should you end your stay on a hurried and harried note?" asks Paul. "You can join us for the day and keep that relaxed island ambience up to the last minute; it doesn't have to end at check out." The package requires reservations, which can be made by calling cel. 582-0153 or contact them through their website: www.nikkybeach-aruba.com.

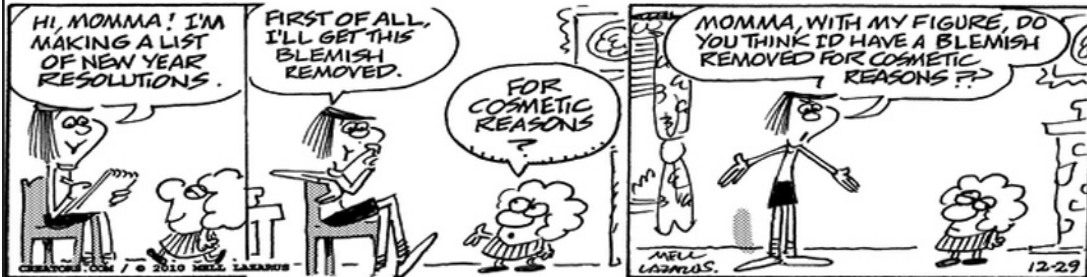
by Rosalie Klein

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PICKLES



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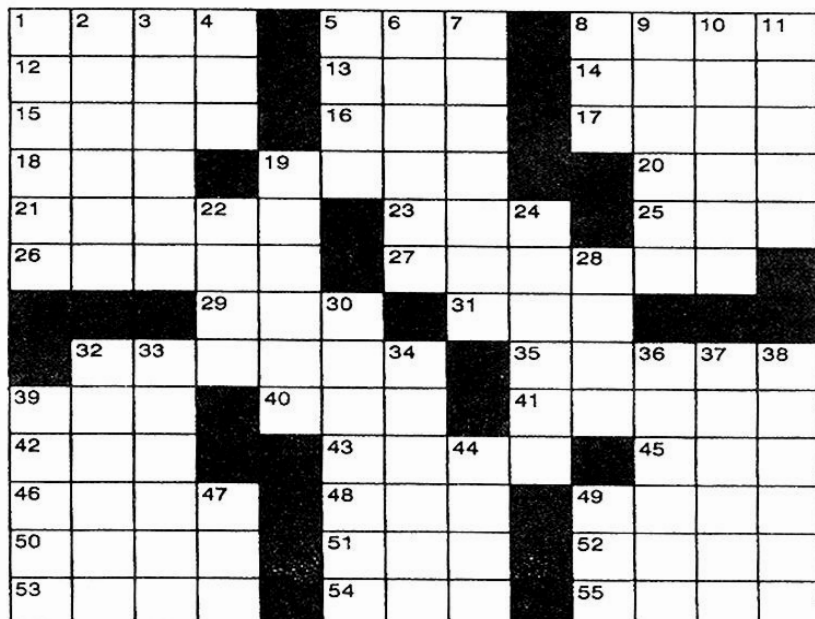
ACROSS

1. Nuisance
5. Scottish cap
8. Dress borders
12. Wheel spindle
13. French friend
14. Words of understanding
15. Read quickly
16. Sprinted
17. Card game
18. Sn
19. Seep
20. Altar words
21. Playful aquatic mammal
23. Sphere
25. My, in Marseilles
26. Organic substance
27. Not wide
29. Large rodent
31. Card game
32. Waver
35. Gold part
39. Sly one
40. Before, to poets

41. Overact
42. Mouth part
43. Shower
45. Body of water
46. Tons
48. Total
49. Sheep bleats
50. Table, in Tijuana
51. Average grade
52. Gaelic
53. Paradise
54. Notable period
55. Uses henna

DOWN

1. Clergyman
2. Stir up
3. Inclines
4. X
5. Starchy root
6. South American river
7. Inorganic matter
8. Towel marking
9. Alaska native
10. Lea
11. Attack
19. Elaborate
22. Paddy's land
24. Fractured
28. Meander
30. Balcony
32. Drudged
33. Bare
34. School book
36. String of beads
37. Military command
38. Ribs
39. Blaze
44. Thought
47. Make leather
49. Futon, e.g.



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 Fri.-Sun. 9 p.m.-2 a.m.

CAS MARIE
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 Care Center
 Tel: 5696910

Important
 Telephone
 Numbers

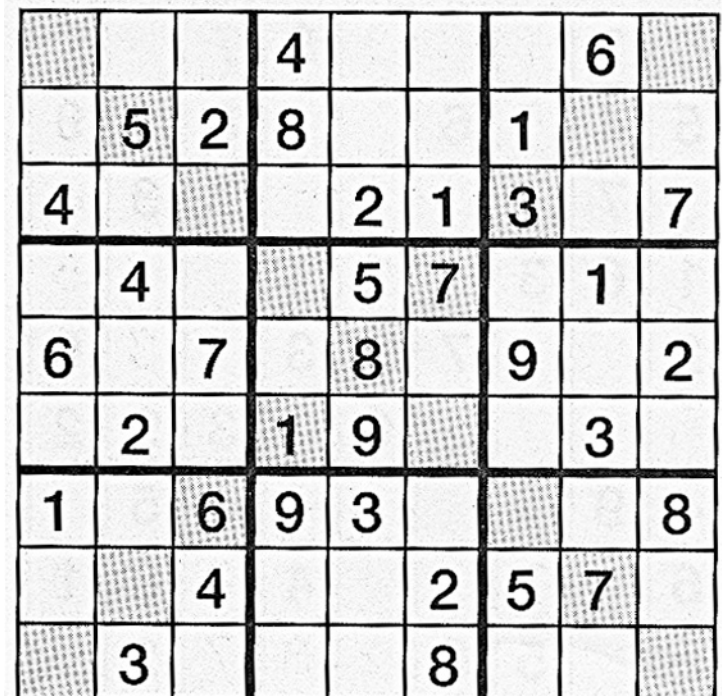
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 Horacio Oduber Hospital
 Tel. 587-4300

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Sudoku



SOLUTION

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| 8 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 1 |
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| 2 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| 9 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 4 |
| 6 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 2 |
| 9 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 5 |

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
 A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
 In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

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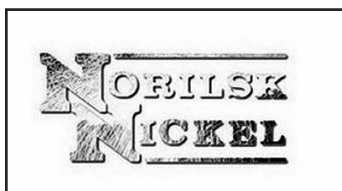
Russia's Norilsk soars on buyback plan

MOSCOW (AFP) – Norilsk Nickel shares soared this week after the world's biggest nickel producer announced a major shares buyback programme following its failure to acquire a 25-percent stake in the company owned by a Russian rival.----

Russia's high-stakes mining dispute came to a boil last week when UC Rusal -- the aluminium giant controlled by the billionaire Oleg Deripaska -- rejected Norilsk's 12 billion dollar offer for the shares.

The purchase would have enabled Norilsk to end a protracted disputed for control of the Arctic giant that also includes another player with a 25 percent stake in the company - Vladimir Potanin's Interros.

News reports said Rusal's Deripaska was demanding 16



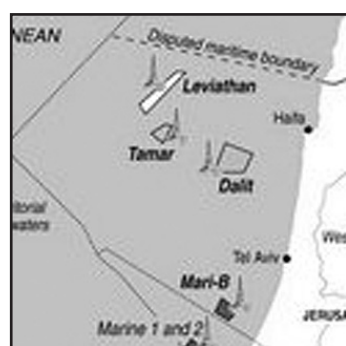
billion dollars for his part of the nickel producer while Norilsk was willing to pay no more than 14 billion.

It tabled a formal 12 billion offer earlier this week that was flatly rejected by Rusal.

"Rusal has always emphasised that its stake in (Norilsk) is a strategic investment, and that the company does not intend to sell it," Rusal said.

Norilsk's board moved quickly to mitigate the damage by approving a one-year 4.5-billion-dollar shares buyback programme intended to give a boost to the company's stock.

Gas field size puts Israel as exporter: US firm



JERUSALEM, Israel (AFP) – A gas field offshore from Israel holds an estimated 450 billion cubic metres (16 trillion cubic feet) of natural gas, positioning the Jewish state as an exporter, Noble Energy said.

The new estimates, announced by the US firm which has a major stake in the field, said the Leviathan gas field dwarfs Israel's next biggest offshore field, Tamar.

"Leviathan is the latest major discovery for Noble Energy and is easily the largest exploration discovery in our history," the firm's chairman Charles Davidson said in a statement.

"This discovery has the potential to position Israel as a natural gas exporting nation," added company president David Stover.

Further tests are required to discover the final estimated capacity of the Leviathan field, which lies offshore near the northern Israeli town of Haifa.

But the capacity announced is encouraging news for Israel, which is hoping natural gas reserves offshore could give the Jewish state energy independence and allow it to export to Europe eventually.

The Tamar field, with an estimated capacity of 178.4 billion cubic metres (6.3 trillion cubic feet), is not yet operational.

It has been dogged by international squabbles between Israel and neighbouring nations over access, and a domestic brawl over the taxes and royalties the state can levy on the field.

Yigal Landau, the head of Ratio Oil Exploration, which holds a 15 percent stake in the field, told Israel's The Marker financial magazine that "this is the largest find in the last decade." Israel's sole operating field, Yam Tethys, which currently supplies about 70 percent of the country's natural gas, will be depleted within three years.

Spain to sell air traffic control at 13 airports

MADRID, Spain (AFP) – Spain's government this week formally launched the privatisation of air traffic control in 13 airports, just weeks after clamping down on a wildcat strike by controllers.

The privatisation of traffic control for the "first 13 airports" was announced in the government bulletin, giving airport operator AENA one month to launch a tender, which will last about seven months.

"This is the largest structural reform in recent years of the airport sector," the Transport Ministry said in a statement. "The passenger will be the beneficiary of this reform because it will improve service quality."

The 13 airports are sprinkled across the country, including Valencia in the east, Seville in the south, the Canary Islands' La Palma, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote and the Mediterranean island of Ibiza.

Others are in Alicante, Sabadell, Jerez, La Coruna, Vigo, Cuatro Vientos and Spain's north African enclave of Melilla.

More privatisations are to follow. The government plans to sell air traffic control services in a total of 47 airports.

A walkout by air traffic controllers on December 3 shut down Spain's airspace at the start of a holiday weekend, disrupting travel for an estimated 300,000 passengers.

Spain's government then declared a state of alert for the first time since the death of General Francisco Franco in 1975, putting controllers under military command with the menace of jail terms for refusing orders to work.

It later extended the 15-day alert until January 15 to ensure smooth travel for the Christmas and New Year period.

The government has accused air traffic controllers of defending "intolerable privileges".

According to the Transport Ministry, there are 2,300 air traffic controllers in Spain earning an average 200,000 euros (266,000 dollars) a year.

In February the government cut back controllers' overtime to a maximum 80 hours a year, slicing into pay packets that

had bulged with overtime pay of two-to-three times the normal rate of 117 euros an hour.

Previously, controllers had earned an average of more than 300,000 euros, with 135 of them taking home more than 600,000 euros a year and 713 between 360,000 and 540,000 euros a year, ministry figures showed.

The controllers argue understaffing forces them to work more than the 1,200 hours a year they consider safe.

The transport ministry said "safety is fully guaranteed" under the privatisation because the new businesses running air traffic control would have to be certified.

According to the ministry, air traffic control has been completely privatised in Britain and Sweden, and partially privatised in Sweden and Italy.

The Spanish government has also announced plans to sell off a stake of up to 49 percent in AENA to shore up the public accounts.

Pope to publish decree against money laundering in Vatican



The Vatican Bank

gal financial activity," will set up a new financial authority in the Vatican, the statement said.

It will also lay down a law on "the prevention and the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism," it said.

ROME, Italy (AFP) – Pope Benedict XVI will publish a decree to fight money laundering in the Vatican, the Holy See said in a press release.

The announcement comes three months after an investigation was launched into two senior figures at the Vatican bank, the Institute for Religious Works (IOR).

Benedict's 'Moto Proprio' document "regarding the prevention and opposition to ille-

agency i.media, which specialises in religious information, the arrangements should eventually allow the Vatican onto the "White list," the list of states that have strict anti-money laundering controls. In September, Italy's financial police seized 23 million euros from IOR as part of an investigation into the bank on suspicion of violating the country's money-laundering rules.

The bank's president Ettore

Gotti Tedeschi and chief executive Paolo Cipriani allegedly violated laws on disclosing financial operations.

In the 1980s, the IOR was at the centre of a banking scandal when Italian bank Banco Ambrosiano collapsed in 1982 amid accusations of links to organised crime and political militancy.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

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Ellioti's offers fine Italian cuisine and cozy island ambiance



Chef Jeffrey Elliot

Since opening in May of 2009, Ellioti's, located adjacent to the Costa Linda parking lot, has established itself as one of the most popular restaurants in the "low-rise" area. Owner Adrianna Sanchez has paid a lot of attention to detail and personally presides over her domain with a welcoming smile and a sincere concern for the satisfaction of her patrons.

The eatery is named for Chef Jeffrey Elliot, who was instrumental in establishing one of Aruba's original and most popular Italian restaurants of days past, Valentino's.

He has brought his deft hand to this charming new location, offering a diversity of dishes which has earned it high praise on a number of Internet review sites such as Tripadvisor and restaurantsaruba.com.

Ellioti's offers al fresco dining on their charming terrace or air-conditioned comfort in the dining room with the ambiance of a cozy Italian home. Fresh homemade pasta at extremely reasonable prices is their specialty, along with authentic Italian treatment of steak, seafood and fowl. Three nights a week the restaurant features live music from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.; every Tuesday enjoy piano accompaniment to your meal, on Saturdays Gerardo will enchant you with his gentle guitar.

If you enjoy a social evening with friends and good conversation with your meal, Ellioti's extremely tranquil setting is the perfect place to savor fine food and company. Open from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. six days a week, closed on Sunday.

It is recommended you call 588-7329 or 588-7339 to make reservations.

By Rosalie Klein

The Residences at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort! Luxury Living at an Island Paradise



Divi Resorts is announcing its latest development on the island of Aruba - The Residences at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort!

We've had great success increasing the timeshare offering on Aruba, however many of our visitors are now requesting a full ownership option rather than weekly accommodation.

To meet this growing demand for a year round Caribbean resort lifestyle, we are now offering luxury full ownership condominiums, The Residences at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort.

The Residences are nestled within the lush greens of the Links at Divi Aruba golf course, adjacent to the new Golf Villas, and share the many amenities of the resort that you know so well: 3 sparkling pools, 3 restaurants, tennis courts, oceanfront fitness center, and more!

Each Residence is available fully furnished, with cool Caribbean colors complimented by rich dark woods. Kitchens are equipped with



stylish stainless steel appliances, and modern conveniences. As always, our private balconies take advantage of soothing breezes and island views. If you are interested in this exciting new development, we invite you to visit our condominium sales office at the 2nd floor of the

Links at Divi Aruba clubhouse next to Windows on Aruba restaurant.

Contact us for an appointment at +297 735 5252 / 735 5300 or email us at sales@diviarubaresidences.com. You may also visit us online at www.diviarubaresidences.com.

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Japan comic publishers to hold rival fair after porn ban

TOKYO, Japan (AFP) - Eight major Japanese manga comic and anime film publishers said they will hold a rival event to Tokyo's top industry fair in protest at a new restriction on sexually explicit materials.

The publishers have decried as censorship a rule introduced in the capital two weeks ago limiting sales of manga and anime with extreme depictions of rape, incest and other illegal sexual acts to adults.

Furious at the bill's main sponsor, conservative city governor Shintaro Ishihara, they had announced a boycott of the industry's top annual event, which Ishihara chairs, the Tokyo International Anime Fair on March 24-27.

The group said they would hold a rival event, dubbed the Anime Contents Expo at a convention centre in Chiba, a satellite city east of Tokyo.

The ordinance passed by the Tokyo metropolitan assembly says that under-18-year-olds must not be able to buy or rent materials that depict such sexual acts in "unjustifiably

glorified or exaggerated ways".

The eight firms, led by Kadokawa Shoten Publishing Co., said they regarded highly the "history and significance" of the Tokyo International Anime Fair, which has been held every year since 2002.

"We examined the possibility and decided to organise an event to help make public new promising products in the same period as we care about the sentiment of fans who have always supported the fair," the statement said. Manga comics are highly popular in Japan with both children and adults.

The graphic novels deal with themes from high school romance to literary classics -- but also with pornography, much of it hardcore and violent.

Although producing and distributing child pornography is illegal in Japan, its possession is not criminalised, and images of "non-existent" underage characters in manga, anime and video games are legal.

'Empire Strikes Back', 'Exorcist' named US cultural icons



WASHINGTON (AFP) - "The Exorcist," the "Star Wars" sequel and "All the President's Men" were named to the Library of Congress National Film Registry, joining 22 other motion pictures honored this year as key reflections of US culture.

Spanning the period 1891-1996, the films will be preserved for generations to come. These "works of enduring significance to American culture" ranged from Hollywood blockbusters to independent films and shorts.

George Lucas's 1967 student film -- a 15-minute short called "Electronic Labyrinth: THX 1138 4EB" -- made the cut, along with his extraordinarily popular sequel of the

which launched John Travolta's movie career; horror classic "The Exorcist" (1973) directed by William Friedkin; and "All the President's Men" (1976) the Oscar-winning film adaptation of journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's uncovering of the Watergate political scandal.

Also included in the registry were lesser-known features like the black independent film "Cry of Jazz," Luis Valdez's "I Am Joaquin" and John Huston's 1946 war documentary "Let There Be Light," which the Pentagon banned for 35 years.

This year's selection brought the number of films in the registry to 550.

"As the nation's repository

of American creativity, the Library of Congress -- with the support of the US Congress -- must ensure the preservation of America's film patrimony," Librarian of Congress James Billington said in a statement.

"The National Film Registry is a reminder to the nation that the preservation of our cinematic creativity must be a priority because about half of the films produced before 1950 and as much as 90 percent of those made before 1920 have been lost to future



generations."

More than 2,100 films were nominated by the public this year.

Cop movie 'Elite Squad 2' outguns 'Avatar' in Brazil



"The film has grabbed the title of the biggest box office hit in Brazilian cinema history, topping the blockbuster 'Avatar' by James Cameron," the producers of the movie crowed

on their website.

The launch of "Elite Squad 2" in Brazil coincided with a spectacular real-life operation by the crack police squad of its

title that swept brutal drug gangs out of a nest of slums in Rio de Janeiro.

It is to get its international showing next month at the Sundance Film Festival in the United States.

SAO PAULO, Brazil (AFP) - "Elite Squad 2," a Brazilian movie mixing explosive action with political intrigue, has become Brazil's top movie of all time, besting even the US blockbuster "Avatar" at the national box office, producers and industry specialists said.

The movie, a sequel to a 2007 original that also became a huge success, has taken 60.5 million dollars in Brazilian ticket sales since its premiere three months ago, topping the 60.4 million dollars "Avatar" pocketed over a similar period, the industry outlet Filme B said.

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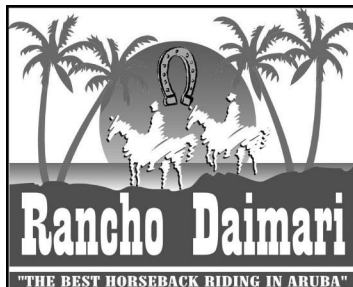
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Flames GM Sutter steps down

CALGARY, Canada (AFP) — Calgary Flames general manager and executive vice-president Darryl Sutter has stepped down, the National Hockey League team announced this week.

Sutter will be replaced by assistant general manager Jay Feaster until the team can find a new GM.

The Flames have struggled to a 16-18-3 record and are fourth in the Northeast Division.

"Darryl has performed valuable service to the Calgary Flames organization for eight years," said Flames president and chief executive Ken King.

"He was the leader that ignited a renaissance of Flames hockey, moving us from a non-playoff team to an organization that was viewed as a respected and popular contender each year."

Sutter joined the Flames in 2002 and has served in a number of positions with the Flames also coaching the team in 2006 before becoming the general manager.

The Sutter family has a history of producing top notch Canadian hockey players. A half dozen Sutter brothers played in the NHL.

Three of Darryl's brothers,

Brian, Duane, Brent have coached in the league. The six brothers have a number of siblings who are either playing in the NHL or climbing up the junior ranks.

Feaster joined the Flames in July after winning a Stanley Cup as the general manager of the Tampa Bay Lightning six years ago.

Darryl Sutter had a long career as a player scoring 161 goals in 406 games but some of his moves as general manager have been questionable.

He signed defenceman Jay Bouwmeester a five-year, 33 million dollar contract prior to the 2009-10 season. Bouwmeester has not made the impact that Flames fans had hoped he would and he has scored just six goals in 111 games with the Flames.

But other moves have panned out for Sutter, including bringing in Mike Cammalleri, Daymond Langkow and goaltender Miika Kiprusoff.

In-form Morgenstern wins first Four Hills event

OBERSTDORF (AFP) — Austrian ski jumping ace Thomas Morgenstern won the opening event of the classic Four Hills tournament on Wednesday.

Morgenstern finished well ahead of Finland's Matti Hautamaeki and Manuel Fettner, also of Austria, as the Austrian team secured five places in the top 10.

Morgenstern has had mixed fortunes since lifting the World Cup title in 2008 but a strong start to this season had put him among the favourites for the Four Hills crown which has one more round in Germany and two in Austria over the next week.

The 24-year-old triple Olympic champion, who has spent the past two seasons in the shadow of compatriot Gregor Schlierenzauer and Swiss sensation Simon Ammann, had four victories and two podium finishes in seven events going into Wednesday's event.

Wade nets 40 points as Heat hold on to beat Knicks



MIAMI (AFP) — Dwyane Wade finished with a season-high 40 points and grabbed nine rebounds as the Miami Heat defeated the New York Knicks 106-98.

Wade's star teammates LeBron James and Chris Bosh each scored 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Heat.

Wade scored 15 of his

points in the fourth quarter for Miami who have won three in a row and 15 of 16 overall.

It was the highest point total for a Miami player this season and the 29th time that Wade has scored at least 40 points in a National Basketball Association regular-season game. Wade pumped in

39 points against Utah last month.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 14 points and 10 rebounds as the Heat held off a late rally to post their seventh consecutive win over the Knicks.

Miami led by as much as 22 at one point before New York stormed back.

Wade, who was the 2006 NBA finals most valuable player, set the table but James iced the win with a driving layup with 40 seconds left to give Miami a seven-point lead.

Amare Stoudemire scored 30 points for the Knicks, who lost for the fourth time in their last six games. Wilson Chandler had 21 for New York, who also got 15 points from Raymond Felton.

Penguins' Crosby extends points streak to 25 games

PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania (AFP) — Canada's Olympic hero Sidney Crosby finished with four points, extending his point streak to 25 as the Pittsburgh Penguins defeated Atlanta 6-3.

Star forward Crosby had two goals and two assists for Pittsburgh, who have won 16 of their last 19 National Hockey League games.

Both Crosby's goals came in the first period. He also assisted on goals by teammates Chris Kunitz and Matt Cooke.

He has recorded 50 points during the streak that began on November 5.

Penguins fans tossed hats on the ice, thinking Crosby had scored Cooke's goal, giving Crosby three for the game. But the officials ruled that Cooke deflected Crosby's long-range slap shot past the Thrashers' goaltender.

It is a tradition in hockey to throw hats on the ice when a player scores three goals, commonly known as a hat-trick.

It marked the second time in the streak Crosby had posted four points in one game.



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Rookie quarterback Webb powers Vikings past Eagles



PHILADELPHIA (AFP) — Rookie quarterback Joe Webb filled in admirably for injured Brett Favre completing 17-of-26 passes in his first NFL start to lead Minnesota to a 24-14 win over Philadelphia.

Webb threw for 195 yards and ran for one touchdown as the Vikings upset the Eagles at Lincoln Financial Field in

the first Tuesday NFL game in 64 years.

"A great effort by our players who showed perseverance which has been a hallmark of our team," Vikings coach Leslie Frazier said.

The game was postponed Sunday night because of severe weather in the Philadelphia area.

Favre suffered a concussion in a recent loss to Chicago and was unable to start for the Vikings who were knocked out of contention for a first-round bye in the post-season.

Runningback Adrian Peterson rushed 23 times for 118 yards and scored with just under seven minutes left for the Vikings.

"My fault I didn't have my players ready to play. It was a complete tail whipping," said Eagles coach Andy Reid.

Philadelphia could have clinched a first-round bye with a win over the Vikings and Dallas and with a loss by either Chicago or Atlanta next week.

The Eagles will now finish as NFC's No. 3 seed and will host the No. 6 seed on January 8 or 9.

Eagles quarterback Michael Vick was sacked a season-high six times.

"It hurts. My focus was making the plays I know I can make. You just got to take the good with the bad," Vick said.

NFL fines Favre for stalling probe

NEW YORK (AFP) — The National Football League has slapped quarterback Brett Favre with a 50,000 dollar fine after the star quarterback "failed to co-operate" with a probe into his conduct off the field.

The league was investigating allegations that Favre sent lewd photos and inappropriate messages to a former New York Jets game-day hostess, Jenn Sterger.

Despite the hefty fine, officials however backed off on saying Favre violated the NFL's personal conduct policy which would have netted him a suspension as well.

"On the basis of the evidence currently available to him, Commissioner [Roger] Goodell could not conclude that Favre violated league policies relating to workplace conduct," Goodell said. "The forensic analysis could not establish that Favre sent the objectionable photographs to Sterger."

Goodell added that the current Minnesota Vikings quarterback was "not candid in several respects during the investigation resulting in a longer review and additional negative public attention for Favre, (Jenn) Sterger and the NFL."

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IOC chief: Rio preparing well for 2016 Olympics

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - Jacques Rogge, the head of the International Olympic Committee, said Wednesday he saw Rio de Janeiro as well on its way to preparing to host the 2016 Olympic Games.

"I'm very happy today because I see the preparations for the Games well underway," he said as he laid a symbolic first stone at what will become the city's Olympic Village.

The ceremony gave an of-

ficial profile to works that are already underway to have the facility ready for the world's premiere sporting event.

Various VIPs attended, including sporting figures, Brazil's former FIFA president and former IOC member Joao Havelange, and Rio state governor Sergio Cabral.

Brazil is to be the first South American country to present the Olympics. Its hosting duties will follow those of 2014 when it holds the football World Cup.



Rogge said the launch of work on the Olympic Village was "fundamental" because it formed "the heart of the Games," a place where participants could mingle while respecting differences of race, religion and languages.

Rio's mayor, Eduardo Paes, said: "Bringing the Games to Rio seemed an impossible dream. But today the city is living a special moment, and this is the first of many actions related to the Games. We will make sure

the Games are exemplary."

Organizers showed Rogge a scale model of the Olympic Village, a facility comprising 48 buildings of 12 storeys that will boast a total 2,880 apartments.

Photos depicts FIFA Honorary President Joao Havelange(L) listening to Rio de Janeiro's Mayor Eduardo Paes during the presentation of a model of the future Olympic Village in Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

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